5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva



improper to eat meat without introducing some element of gift exchange, very much like 'party food' in our own society.

In general, people take any wood they need from their own land. The only record I have of transactions involving wood concerns the obtaining of less common building materials for houses. My informants made a clear distinction between gifts of bush trees and gifts of sago. The former kind create no specific debt but whenever sago is taken a return gift is expected, because, I was told, sago is a cultivated plant.

With regard to feathers and *hambo*, attitudes differ as between areas where raw materials are plentiful and areas where they are rare. On the Mount Lamington foothills they seldom enter the exchange network – perhaps once a generarion, during a ceremony of uncommon importance. On the alluvial plains, they are a frequent trade item.[8] Of other items of traditional trade, betelnuts and lime are the most important. Betelnut grows only on the foothills; lime is made of shells collected on the seashore. It was, and is, therefore common to exchange one for the other, as betelnut can be chewed only together with lime and betelnut chewing is as popular a social activity among the Orokaiva as it is throughout New Guinea and Indonesia. A peppery plant called *hingi* (piper betel) is always chewed with the other two ingredients. This again grows best on the hills, so that it is often exchanged with the betelnuts. The alluvial plains are in a poor bargaining position with regard to the betelnut complex as they produce none of the ingredients from their own land. It may be partly for this reason that they are accustomed to accumulating animal products and to using these as objects of trade.

By far the largest number of exchanges take place within a village, only a minority of transactions occurring between members of different village

TABLE II/7

ACQUISITION OF 'HAMBO' AND 'DI'
(*Source*: Crocombe and Hogbin 1963: 51; Rimoldi 1966: 80)

| | *Sivepe* | | *Inonda* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Hambo* | *Di* | *Hambo* | *Di* |
| Inheritance, cash value ($) | 48.40 | 17.60 | 18.60 | 5.70 |
| Percentage | 53% | 40% | 17% | 12% |
| Cash Purchase, value ($) | 9.30 | 4.50 | 36.10 | 2.00 |
| Percentage | 10% | 10% | 33% | 4% |
| Bride price or other exchanges, value ($) | 17.70 | 6.50 | 48.30 | 17.90 |
| Percentage | 19% | 14% | 44% | 38% |
| Made or caught, value ($) | 16.60 | 15.40 | 5.90 | 21.10 |
| Percentage | 18% | 35% | 5% | 45% |
| *Total, value*: ($) | 92.00 | 44.00 | 108.90 | 46.70 |

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
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The first plans for a feast are laid at least one year in advance, as it involves extra plantings of taro as well as economising on pigs. By the end of December, the feast taro ought to have finished flowering and the tubers ought to have formed. It is only then that the chances of an abundant harvest can be reasonably assessed. The feast-giver stealthily tours the village gardens to see whether the taro are 'ready', collecting tubers in gardens where tubers have formed and collecting flowers in those gardens which are lagging behind. He hides these specimens in his house. If his examination has been successful, he calls a meeting attended by all the men of the village (but not the women) at which the assembled people formally acknowledge that they are planning a feast. The leader will display the taro and the flowers he has collected, thus demonstrating visibly whose gardens will and will not be able to contribute food to the feast. The meeting decides who will be invited to the feast. The men share the meat of an animal, traditionally a pig, but nowadays often a rooster.

This ritual is clearly intended to remove obstacles that might prevent harmonious social relations from being established at the feast. I have already discussed[5] a myth which contained a charter for this custom of examining the gardens: it told the story of a food shortage which caused a quarrel and concluded with the enunciation by a *dema* of a rule that feasts should in future be held only in times of abundance. It is not sufficient, of course, for the people to say and to believe that there will be abundance. Abundance must be established ritually so as to be placed beyond human dispute.

The pig sacrifice at this meeting serves to remove any latent hostility between the men of the group, so that all will be united and co-operate unreservedly towards the success of the feast. Though the *pondo kiari embo* tends to be a man of much influence in the village, he does not normally have any authority over resources held by any extended family other than his own. It is only for the specific purpose of feast-giving that he is given such authority, and it is limited in time from the meeting just described until the day of the feast itself. The meeting thus temporarily changes the authority structure of the village. The growing taro crop and the available pigs become, at least ideally, the corporate property of the village, whereas normally they are family property. The *pondo kiari embo* becomes, at least formally and ritually, the controller of this property. The unit of the group of offerers of the sacrifice is a necessary condition for the success of the rituals that follow.

The same principle underlies one detail of the ritual taro display to which I have not yet made reference. At the meeting 'special betelnuts' (I do not know just what medicine is used on them) are distributed by the feast-giver to be shared, after the meeting, between the men and their wives. The men are to ask their wives whether the taro are ready. This is a ritual question, as the men go to the garden daily, but it is the women who are supposed to have charge of growing taro and – in a ritual sense – the men therefore do not know. After receiving an answer to this question, the husband will share the 'special' betelnut with his wife. While the enacting of this ritual would make even the most slow-witted of women aware of what is afoot, the women should still supposedly remain ignorant of the plan to hold a feast. Informants readily admit that this ignorance is a fiction. The significance of the shared betelnut is to provide against the anger a wife might feel when the taro harvest over which she has ritual control is

incontinently appropriated by her husband. The sharing of a fruit, especially a twin fruit, is a frequent practice when two people wish to establish or restore specially close bonds with one another. It constitutes a mutual pledge of friendship by agreeing to have a feast and take all the taro; they are re-establishing it by the betelnut-sharing. Thus we meet again the theme of the removal of conflict and the promoting of communion that dominates the feasting institution.

After the meeting, an invitation is sent to the chosen village. This takes the form of a small preliminary gift of betelnut and food, symbolic of the bounty to come later. The sending of this gift is called *sope ikari*. The men begin to build the feast house, a special structure which looks quite different from modern houses, but seems to correspond in almost every respect to the design of ordinary pre-contact Orokaiva houses. A style of carving used on the posts of modern feast houses seems to derive from the taro cult prevalent in the Northern District shortly after 1914 (see Chinnery and Haddon 1917, Williams 1928). The house is normally ready about a month before the feast. The ritual task of drawing down the spirits to dwell in the house and possess the offerers of sacrifice now begins. There is an all-night dance in which only initiated men participate, and at which bullroarers and flutes are used to draw the spirits. (For these instruments see Chinnery and Beaver 1915, Williams 1930: 195.) Though informants claimed that this ritual was now abandoned, I know it was enacted at Urarituru, two miles from Sivepe, in 1967. In some villages this dance is repeated (as Williams also notes, 1930: 230) from time to time before the feast, while it is also general practice to sit in front of the feast house at night and sing feast chants, which I heard one evening at Inonda. Each chant dealt either in forthright direct language or more symbolically with one of the objects necessary for a feast: meat, taro, various other vegetables and fruits, clothes, ornaments, betelnut, etc., telling them all to be plentiful. Another chant was addressed to the smoke arising from the fire inside the feast-house, telling it to draw to the village an abundance of guests. As these chants proceed at night, people busy themselves by bringing in food for the feast, preparing ceremonial clothing, and ornaments to be worn by the hosts.

The main effect of these preparations is to induce in the offerers of sacrifice a psychological identification with the *dema* of primeval time. Very little agricultural work is done in this part of the year except harvesting so that virtually all productive energy goes into ceremonial preparations. Those who are to play the role of visitors must likewise prepare, as they are usually called upon to dance, and so need to make or renovate the same paraphernalia and rehearse their dances. The change of identity that occurs when people wear ceremonial dress is strongly emphasised. Everybody must act as though this dress actually makes the wearer unrecognisable. Informants variously explain that the wearer is a wallaby, a flower, one of a number of species of birds perhaps, or an *embahi* – a spirit. Williams has described how initiands are expected to show fear of the *embahi* at initiation and be mystified by the disguise. Initiation, indeed, is the ritual whereby young people learn the dual identity of men: the everyday people one sees about the village, and the ancestral spirits which may at any time transform these familiar people into beings of primal time. The curious nasal sound of the feasting songs emphasises this new identity.

We shall need to consider exchange from two points of view: first, as in the preceding chapters, we may consider it phenomenologically, from the viewpoint of the transactional polarity of the exchange partners; secondly, we may consider it from the viewpoint of symbolic thought, as something like the dialogue between *Yin* and *Yang*, as the product of Orokaiva intelligence reflecting upon affective experience.[1] It is this second approach which will be appropriate for much of our discussion about the remarkable Orokaiva myth of the coconut and the betelnut.

## 2. *The Minor Foods: Objects of Mediation and Paired Symbols*

Although this chapter will deal mainly with the coconut and betelnut, it will be useful first to set this couple into a wider ecological and cultural context. Coconut and betelnut have been chosen for detailed treatment out of a large number of minor foods of the Orokaiva, many of which have their special importance as objects of mediation. An interesting aspect of these minor foods is that Orokaiva symbolic thought arranges them in couples to which a male/female opposition is usually ascribed. Very often these plant couples are grown in close association with one another and it is claimed that they will not prosper unless they are planted together and that, in their wild state, they are also found together. The symbolic association of these pairs of plants may be based on any of a number of shared characteristics: the similar outward appearance of the fruit, a coincidence in the time of fruiting, a similarity in culinary use, in taste, in supposed physiological effects of the fruit when eaten. Sometimes the pair of plants are linked in ritual use and in a common myth.

Among examples of this pairing tendency that may be quoted are two varieties of breadfruit, called *oga* and *eumba*; two condiments important in initiation ritual: the *puga* nut and the salt vine *hoe*; the yam and a red fruit called *hamesi*. The coconut (*vu*) and betelnut or *areca* (*su*) are similarly a pair of subsidiary foods between which there are important points of resemblance which led to their being paired together, and important points of difference which led one of them to be classified as male and the other as female.

Coconut and betelnut are planted together in villages and also in gardens. Both nuts are eaten raw, young coconuts for refreshment, *areca* for relaxation, and both are consumed between meals. Both nuts grow on palms. Both foods have notable (though different) biochemical effects on those who eat them. Both foods are standard gifts made to strangers who visit a village, a coconut being offered as refreshment immediately upon arrival while betelnut is chewed (along with *hingi* pepper and lime) during the conversation. The two nuts are also associated in ritual use. At mortuary feasts, the most important gift objects are large quantities of betelnuts and coconuts harvested from the palms of the deceased, while dry coconut and betelnut are strewn on graves by affines of the deceased. Finally, coconut and betelnut are associated in an important myth which I intend to discuss in detail.

In studying plant couples such as coconut and betelnut two aspects of exchange need to be considered: first, exchanges between persons in which the food products appear as objects of mediation and secondly, mythical exchanges between the male and female plant, where the two plants appear as exchange

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
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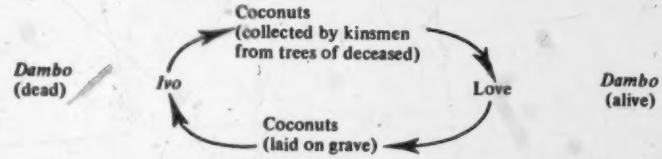
of coconut gifts, in a great variety of sometimes quite casual relationships, the most crucial communication occurs in the large-scale, highly structured mortuary feast where we may regard the archetypal exchange situation as occurring between brothers-in-law (*dambo*), one of whom is dead while the other is alive. The exchange cycle is as follows:

MODEL 28




## 4. Areca *as Object of Mediation*

*Areca*, a mildly narcotic fruit, is chewed with lime and pepper (*hingi*) when persons, often from different households, are sitting together to relax and talk. It is always offered when friendly visitors arrive from other villages. It is chewed by women as much as by men, though by Waddell's statistics men act more frequently as donors of *areca* in the exchange network (71 per cent of recorded cases). *Areca* is the only Sivepe food product of which, by Waddell's statistics, more than half the disposals are to other than village residents. Table VIII/1 summarises the number of transactions but does not show that Sivepe is an exporter of betelnut, while lime is imported. Much of this export is in barter but sales for money also occur.

When friends from the same village are sitting together betelnut is shared in much the same way as beer in our culture, i.e. people offer nuts to each other but expect to come out approximately even. At visits to another village, it is more common for the principal visitor to make a bulk donation. The hosts share out betelnut among their guests either by throwing a few nuts to each person or (on more formal occasions) by the principal host presenting the principal visitor with a large bunch, leaving the latter to share them out among his people. The visitors also hand a nut to anyone in the host group who has no nut to chew. The two principals will distribute some of the *areca* they have received to chosen persons within their own group.

Betelnut is treated as a valuable commodity. It is never given away in heaps like ordinary garden crops. Its value is undoubtedly associated with its narcotic properties. At social gatherings its main effect appears to be that it creates a relaxed and genial atmosphere, breaking down hostility otherwise likely to exist between groups. Its magical use is so widespread that its supposed effect is hard to determine from the evidence of medicines. Many medicines consist of *areca* chewed with some specific purpose, and as such it is applied in hunting magic, magic for drumming, and magic against a variety of diseases.

In ritual its role is often the same as coconut, e.g. at mortuary feasts. The exchange cycle shown in model 28 applies similarly to betelnut. Yet, just as its

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
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TABLE VIII/1

'ARECA' TRANSACTIONS: SIVEPE AND INONDA

The following figures group together transactions involving *areca* nuts and lime used for chewing with *areca*.

(*Source*: Waddell and Krinks, 1968: 180, 210, 218, 237, 265, 270, 272)

| | *Sivepe* | | *Inonda* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Acquired* | *Disposed* | *Acquired* | *Disposed* |
| Total transactions (lbs.) | 124 | 114 | 93 | 39 |
| Distribution (%) | | | | |
| within village | 56% | 44% | 30% | 57% |
| outside village | 44% | 56% | 70% | 43% |
| Non-monetary transactions (lbs.) | 107 | 100 | 83? | 38? |
| Monetary transactions (lbs.) | 17 | 15 | 9.8 | 1.0 |
| ($) | 3.70 | 3.00 | 2.06 | 0.20 |
| Donors and recipients by sex: Men | 52% | 71% | 42% | 36% |
| Women | 48% | 29% | 58% | 64% |

biochemical action differs from that of the coconut (narcotic rather than nutritive), so its symbolic significance in magic and ritual also differs. A girl carries a bunch of betelnut at the ceremony concluding her seclusion after first menstruation. She also has betelnut to offer to a man at lovers' meetings.

The only betelnut myth recorded by Williams (1928: 123) emphasises the nut's aphrodisiac associations. The betel palm had a liaison with a village woman. Every night it bent over her house to visit her; every morning, as the birds woke, it bent back to stand once more as an immobile palm but left around her house a litter of small flowers. When the intrigue was discovered, the jealous husband cut down the palm. The lover cried as he fell: 'Now I am a man no longer but a mere betel palm; take these nuts and eat them.' This myth resembles the one collected by myself in that the hero was a male, although the *areca* palm is classified by Orokaiva as a female plant. The explanation of this remarkable discrepancy will be one of the main tasks of the present chapter.

The symbolic significance of the betelnut is not, however, exhausted by its role as a catalyst in sexual love. One may call it, more properly, a catalyst in any kind of social exchange. As such, it helps to restore amity between former enemies. Its narcotic action raises the spirits of both opponents to the sphere of primal time when no strife existed. In sexual love, according to Orokaiva, feminine sexuality is dangerous, even lethal, to man in certain circumstances, a notion which is reflected in a number of avoidances woman must practice in order to avoid polluting and ritually killing a man. In courtship, the woman must take the initiative; the man is represented as slow and reluctant, precisely

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
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because of the dangers he fears from contact with the female. By offering betelnut, woman overcomes this reluctance in man and draws him into the sexual exchange she desires.

## 5. *The Myth of Coconut and Betelnut*

Though we have now summarised the exchange cycles mediated by coconut and betelnut, we have not shown why these objects of mediation are considered to be efficacious in exchange. In past chapters we have explained efficacity in terms of indigenous philosophy. Indigenous logic generally relies on a myth in which a specific precept is either explicitly stated or implied. By giving this precept the status of an axiom, we can show by logical deduction that a thing (land, taro, pig, etc.) can have potency as an object of mediation in certain transactions.[2]

This kind of explanation of mediation draws on mythical sources much in the same way as Malinowski. Malinowski held that the 'function' of a myth is the charter it provides for customary rules. I can see no objection to this approach as long as we can be sure, from independent evidence, that charter and custom really coincide, which is not always the case, and as long as we check carefully how informants perform the logical deduction. If charter and custom do not coincide, we need to go beyond Malinowski's techniques of myth analysis and seek out the message by decoding the symbolic language of the myth. The betelnut myth already quoted provides an instance of discrepancy between myth and custom.[3] According to the myth it is the man who gives betelnut to the woman, whereas we know that in girls' initiation ritual and in courting custom, i.e. in the most structured betelnut presentations, the *woman* plays the role of donor and the plant is classified as feminine.

Such a discrepancy might easily be dismissed as too trivial for investigation but for the fact that it seems to be related to the disagreement between Mauss and Lévi-Strauss to which I referred earlier in this chapter. Mauss' theory of the gift would not easily explain this type of reversal, which would serve as a useful corroboration of Lévi-Strauss' contention that the 'contradiction' in the donor-recipient relationship may be illusory. I am not suggesting that his theory can be proved by empirical evidence, but only that it can be corroborated if we find evidence that Orokaiva informants do not treat exchange as purely magical, but recognise its synthetic character in their reasoning about myth, ritual and rules of behaviour.

The beginning of the myth to be discussed here is well-known; I was told it several times and Williams also recorded it (1928: 122). Here follows a summary of a version I collected on tape in the Orokaiva language: A beautiful girl, noted for her remarkable breasts, has the misfortune to kill all the young men with whom she sleeps. Her breasts prick and kill them. She warns them to sleep against her back but they never follow this advice. The girl's brother becomes concerned and tells her that he personally will choose her next sleeping partner. He chooses his own *dambo*, i.e. his wife's brother. He tells his *dambo*:

> Because mistakes were made other bachelors have died, but, my *dambo*, my true *dambo*, she is going to sleep; she is going up to bed. Therefore see that all is properly prepared and the bed is properly made for sleeping.

142
241
412
411

*Fig. 7. The New Guinea gardener's work tools, an axe, and large bush knife. The strong heavy spear is carried just in case he should see a wild pig. The cigarette, rolled with newspaper, is almost indispensable to most New Guineans* [276]

trunk of the sago palm which grows in wet or swampy ground. The sago is extracted by first cutting down the palm, then pounding up the fibre and washing out the starch. This passes through a coconut fibre screen into a settling tank. Four people can make 100 pounds of sago a day. 222 252 [461]

e) *Grass fires.* The origin and extension of tropical grasslands has long been a matter of debate. Large areas of grassland occur in Yega territory where villagers regard them as practically useless. Grasslands are extended by fire but only in special circumstances. Grassland fires seldom penetrate or destroy an area of mature rain forest or even areas of well-developed secondary growth. The danger period is the first two years after a swidden is abandoned. At this time there is a large quantity of grass and undergrowth amongst the young trees. If a fire spreads from adjacent grasslands to this highly inflammable material the young trees are destroyed. Being immature, they have not yet seeded and further forest regrowth is prevented. This circumstance is most likely to occur on the south-west margins of grassland areas where strong north-easterly 372

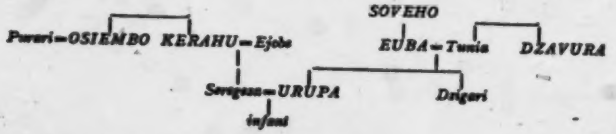
[P.10-A]

21: Belshaw E-5 (1951) 1951 OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mount Lamington



the final situation is satisfactorily sorted out. In such ways, incidentally, it is probable that new clans are formed. 000

Another factor which must inevitably delay re-building is the activity needed to re-establish social connections. When I was at Popota village one week-end I checked on food that was being eaten, and found that although the children were carefully fed with nuts, pumpkin tops and other valuable foods, the adults were either going without food altogether or eating the despised wild yam; their taro gardens were rotten or choked with weeds. I noticed with surprise a group of people, heavily laden with bags of taro, hurrying along the road. They walked straight into the village and up to a house, and a few minutes later I heard the noise of crying and wailing. A group of nine people were sitting in two rows facing each other under the shadow of a humpy. The relationship of the whole group, with the exception of two unrelated village women, is expressed in the following diagram (capitals signifies men, lower case women).




Kerahu and Ejobe lived in Popota, and their daughter Seregeza married a Sasembata man. When the volcano erupted parents and daughter were evacuated in different directions, and although from time to time they heard news of each other they were unable to see each other. When they returned to their villages the daughter's first thought was to visit her parents, but this could not be done until a humpy had been built and a present of food collected. On this day that they met the procedure was almost automatic: it was like a well-rehearsed play in which every actor knew his part. Seregeza sat down with her baby, and her father gently cried by her side. Her mother sat in front of her, embracing her and crying in a wail:

*Nau kahare isio tungenu*

*Ijoio posia isio tungenu.*

This was translated for me as "I am the girl who was chased away, to other countries, other places chased away." Meanwhile Urupa and his family squatted on mats facing the crying group and chewing areca nut, and Purari with a village woman relieved Seregeza of her bag of taro and began peeling it. The wailing continued for about an hour, other friends and relatives joining the group, and then conversation became general and food was eaten.

In such ways are the social connections remade. And some thought and activity is being devoted to other ends as well—the dance, for instance. Although there was no desire evident to conduct large mortuary feasts for those who had been killed, it may be expected that, as gardens come back into bearing, individuals will

241 devote less time to the cultivation of the more laborious (but more
311 favoured) Colocasia taro.

During the post-eruption period there have been, as we shall
[433] see below, many pressures on the Orokaiva to reallocate their working time, by raising the standard of village building construction, by taking on outside labour to raise taxes and buy luxuries, by increasing the acreage in cash crops. In many cultures dependent on swidden agriculture these pressures have led to more slipshod methods of cultivation, or smaller plantings or shorter fallowing periods. Among the Orokaiva, the only effect so far has been, in all probability, a decline in the surpluses grown for feasts. This is a change to be discussed later and related to religious changes. In Sivepe there would clearly be a danger, if cash-cropping was expanded to the extent some administration officers would like to see, that fallowing periods in subsistence gardens would need to be shortened. There is no evidence that subsistence gardening, so far, has been affected by cash cropping, as both the acreage and the time devoted to cash crops is too small. (For details of time allocation to activities in both villages, see Table 8.)

245 The average Sivepe family, according to Rimoldi, has 62 cultivated trees of local origin from which crops are gathered in season. No corresponding figure is available for Inonda, but it would be about 30. The list of most important trees varies a little between the two districts because of differences of climate and soil.

| Sivepe | Inonda |
|---|---|
| Coconut | Sago |
| Breadfruit (oga and sumba) | Coconut |
| Betelnut (areca) | Betelnut |
| Sago | Hauga nut (tauga) |
| Pandanus | Breadfruit |
| Tauga nut (cycas media) | Pandanus |
| Puga nut (terminalia okaria) | (Ajimo) |
| Bark cloth tree (ajimo) | |
| Mango | |

An important difference between the resources of the two villages is that coconuts at Inonda will yield copra; hence, a copra drying house was built and this has been and can be a source
[262] of income. At Sivepe, the flesh is thinner and coconuts are grown for drinking, cooking, feeding dogs and chickens, while the nuts are also eaten regularly and form a useful source of protein. Another
249 difference is that neither betelnut nor tauga and puga do well at all in the Inonda district and quantities are negligible. The lack
276 of betelnuts is felt very strongly, as the Inonda people are as
438 A fond of chewing it as other Orokaiva. Hence, it is usually obtained

[See Cat. 116, p. 213--Analyst]

276 439 from relatives who live in the mountain districts or else obtained by barter, or bought from other villages or at the Popondetta market.

245 [262] Sago is made and eaten when other crops fail, but the plants are also used as building material. As the supply of sago is very limited in both villages, the plants are highly prized. Inonda people owned only 21 trees so that the bulk of supplies was obtained from other areas, e.g., from wild sago trees over which they claim rights. In Sivepe, the total supply is in the vicinity of, probably, 300. This suffices for the local need, both as an occasional supplementation of the food supply and for building, when a great quantity is needed.

[199] The special position of sago among economic trees was shown clearly in Miss White's description of the building of Sasembata mission station shortly after the eruption. This was a big project in which all the surrounding villages (including Sivepe) collaborated. Labour was given free and so were all building materials--apart from sago for which payment was expected and made. I was told by informants this was because sago is a cultivated, not a bush tree. During my field work period, the mission again needed sago roofing for expansion and repair of buildings, but this time no payment was made. However, each household was asked for a contribution of only two strips of roofing. Thus, it was again treated as a resource of special value as other materials were not supplied in such strict rations.

The ajimo tree, used for manufacturing bark cloth was not reported in Inonda by Crocombe and Hogbin but we did find a small [287] quantity growing. Though bark cloth is only used for dancing costumes nowadays, in both villages, these dances still take place from time to time. The women's clubs have stimulated the production of painted bark cloth for sale, but this has not led to extra plantings. Sivepe's supply of ajimo trees was only one or two for most households, sufficient for an occasional festive garment with none to spare, but there was an abundance of ajimo in some other villages in the Sasembata district. Here we may notice a definite change between the pre-eruption period and the present at pre-eruption Inonda and because at Pamba, bark cloth was still the daily wear for everybody, so that the ajimo was an important economic tree. With this exception, there would seem to have been no change in the resources of economic trees of local origin.

241 177 The three introduced cash crops of significance in the two villages have been rice (pre-eruption), coffee and rubber; in both villages, one man grew a little cocoa. These industries, which developed in intensive interaction with Australian authorities, are perhaps better discussed in detail in a later chapter when these [243] relationships are analysed. Rice plots were developed in the period between the second world war and the eruption; the plots in both

177 higher certificate after a two-year course, while various teacher
657 training programmes were involving a number of them. Furthermore,
647 the inspector in charge of the school and, after January, 1967, also
the District Inspector of Schools was a Papuan. Thus, in the Church
as well as in the Health and Education Department, Papuans were in
[895] actual administrative control over Northern District operations,
with white personnel nominally their subordinates. The term
"nominally" must be applied to the relative rank of Papuan controllers
and expatriate subordinates, because the latter are still receiving
a very much higher salary. Nonetheless, the new situation definitely
sets up a hierarchy, with Papuans at senior levels, and the village
people are in official contact with them.

[631] I shall give two further examples of contacts with Papuan
public servants. The first was with a clerk sent out by the
Department of Lands, whose task it was to organise the establishment
of boundaries between the wards. This man was an Orokaiva, from
Jegarata, who explained the purpose of the boundaries in the Orokaiva
language, at a meeting held in Garombi and supposedly attended by
all the villages in the ward. A spirited discussion took place,
the people suggested village representatives, the clerk accepted
the representatives proposed for Sivepe and Garombi, but was non-
committal over the other two, as he saw Isoge and Binduta were
[276] insufficiently represented. He chewed betelnut with the people;
the whole procedure was matter-of-fact and businesslike, and no
covering-up was attempted for the two ill-represented villages.
[191] The absence of an interpreter, the use of Orokaiva instead of the
lingua franca (Motu), the free use of betelnut, the fact that we
all sat on mats together--all this established an easy bridge
between government and people.

242 During the same period, a good deal of agricultural extension
177 work was in progress in the nearby village of Sasembata. Here
again, the day-to-day instruction was given by two Northern District
Papuans, agricultural assistants, in a rather more junior position
to the Lands Department clerk. These two young men were definitely
supervised by an expatriate officer; they were staying in Sasembata
village for awhile and came over to Sivepe one night for a small
feast and a dance. Though they were both Aiga, they mixed easily
with their Orokaiva agemates, on a basis of equality and familiarity.
They were the guests of a third agricultural assistant, who belonged
to Sasembata village but were working for the Department at Saiho.
This young man gave me a description of the scope of agricultural
development (a rubber cooperative) proceeding in Sasembata. He had
a mature and responsible understanding of the project.

657 Finally, Papuan government drivers had highly significant
647 though informal contacts with villagers. These men, highly skilled
177 at negotiating the difficult roads of the Northern District, have
the task of driving government personnel where they wish to go and
often travel unaccompanied by officers to collect personnel or cargo.

government driver) had gone there and continued at Martyr's school at Sangara. He survived because the mountain erupted during the school holidays. At Sivepe, some children had started going to the Jesembata school, opened in 1945, but attendance was irregular. Nonetheless, there were few people under 30 in 1966, who had not had some schooling.

Goods such as meat, sugar, tobacco were known in Sivepe at the time of the eruption, and bought in trade stores; some people used European pots and others used clay pots. By 1966, all regular production of clay pots in Sivepe had ended; they were not even included ceremonially in bridewealth. It was always the young men, away on labouring jobs, who introduced the innovations in material culture, who brought their mothers and new wives European pots, who came home flaunting European clothes, who first used nails in building their houses. In Inonda, at the time of the eruption, the young men were already wearing "trousers"; in Sivepe, this came later, at the time of the local government council. In both villages, this same association was stressed: the European cloths were accepted for village wear at the time the council started and the example was set not only by the bachelors returning from town but also by the councillors themselves. There was a councillor resident in both villages in the years immediately following 1956; it was their influence that tipped the balance in dress innovation.

At the time of the eruption, cash cropping had not yet started at all in Sivepe, but at Inonda, one man (the father of the present government driver) was already selling coffee for which he was paid $3 per bag by the government. The government also bought copra from him which he prepared by breaking up coconuts and drying them in a fire. He stopped this trade at the time of the eruption but resumed in 1954. In Sivepe, coffee growing started in 1956 on two "company" plots. It was in other words a community activity rather than a case of individual entrepreneurship. Rimoldi (1966: 84) reports that individual coffee gardens started in 1957 only after patrol officers advised against having jointly operated ones.

It is not easy to say just how much linguistic knowledge had been absorbed before the eruption, or even now. If one asks a man what languages he knows, he lists all those he has had contact with on his travels; always Motu, not infrequently Pidgin, and also often an assortment of New Guinea languages marking the spots where he has worked. Wherever a man works, he learns some of the language, but his knowledge rarely passes exacting tests. Orokaiva men who said they knew Aiga could not actually translate the Aiga texts I taped into Orokaiva. It would be most interesting to do research on the actual knowledge of these Papuan polyglots. In a country where so many languages are spoken, communication between persons with different vernacular is a crucial process. There is no doubt that travelling Orokaiva make a great effort to adapt themselves to the regions they visit. If they have personal contact with their employers, they learn a great deal from them too. From the data I have presented it is plain that travel has been the major acculturative influence among the Orokaiva.

26: Schwimmer E-5 (1966-1970) 1974
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the dead person. At ordinary harvest feasts and bride-wealth payments they are seen on display platforms along with taro and other vegetables. They are then subsidiary to taro and pigs, which are the main food gifts, but at mortuary feasts vast quantities are given, saved from the dead man's palms, which are made taboo until this feast. Dry coconut and areca are strewn on graves by affines of the deceased.

The distinctive features perceived by Orokaiva in each species should also be summarized. Coconut is believed to be a valuable adjunct to the diet of children and dogs (also chickens). In Orokaiva myths, its miraculous effect on children and dogs is often described. To the scientific observer this effect is natural enough as coconut is an important source of first-class protein for both children and dogs, who otherwise do not get much first-class protein. Coconut oil is used as a cosmetic for hair and body not only to enhance beauty but also for its magical efficacy, for the purification of man-slayers (Williams, 1930: 175, 207), and for women who are being initiated or who welcome visitors at dances. In all such cases it is the task of a male to pour the coconut milk over the persons whose magical protection is intended.

Areca, a mildly hallucinogenic fruit, is chewed by women as much as by men. When friends are sitting together, it is shared in much the same way as beer among white Australians. People offer nuts to each other but expect to come out approximately even. Visitors from other villages expect to be offered areca by their hosts. Its main physiological effect is to create a dreamy amiability and to break down hostility that might otherwise exist. Its magical uses, mostly in association with some medicine of more specific purpose, are too many to enumerate. A girl carries a bunch of areca at the ceremony which ends her seclusion after first menstruation. She normally offers it to her man at lovers' meetings.

Although I have a number of coconut and areca myths on record, I shall discuss here only one, the fullest one, which illustrates my argument most clearly. A beautiful girl, noted for her remarkable breasts, had the misfortune of killing all the young men with whom she slept. Her breasts pricked and killed them.